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TEN YEARS AFTER

On May 8th 1955 democrats in both halves of Germany celebrated the tenth anniversary of the overthrow of German fascism by the victorious Allies.

In the German Democratic Republic the occasion was marked by meetings and demonstrations commemorating the beginning of a new era in German history, and the establishment in East Germany of the first democratic and peacable German state. At all these meetings the rise of a new militarism in West Germany was condemned.

At the central demonstration in Berlin, attended by Soviet Marshal Georgi Zhukov, who commanded the Soviet armies which beat Hitler, factory workers in blue overalls, and armed with rifles, paraded to show that they would defend their achievements against any attack.

"WE SHALL DEFEND OURSELVES"

— Prime Minister Grotewohl

Speaking at a state celebration on the eve of Liberation Day, East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl emphasised that the workers of the German Democratic Republic would take all necessary measures to defend themselves from the West German militarists and neo-fascists. He stated:

"The American and West German militarists want to rob the German Democratic Republic of its ground, its woods, its ores and coal, its foundries, factories and universities.

"The working people of the German Democratic Republic will not permit this. They will defend with all their strength that which they themselves have rebuilt after the war.

"In the interests of security the German Democratic Republic will carry out all measures already agreed upon. The Garrison People's Police will be developed into an effective instrument of defence. The workers in the factories are forming fighting-groups and training. And the German Democratic Republic has strong and mighty friends.

"On May 11th Warsaw Conference will meet to discuss the conclusion of a pact of friendship, cooperation and mutual aid, and the question of organising a joint military command for the states participating (Soviet Union, European People's Democracies, German Democratic Republic).

"The pact to be concluded in Warsaw will not be a war pact, aimed in an aggressive sense at any state or group of states. It is a pact which will serve peace, and bar the way to aggression in Europe. The history of the last few decades will not be repeated: this time the military expansion of the American and West German militarists will be brought to a decisive halt in its very first stages."

Earlier in his speech, Prime Minister Grotewohl repeated the offer of peaceful negotiations with the West German Government which has been made so many times in the past (For chronicle of past East German offers to West Germany, see page 73).

He stated:

"Our Government is ready, now as in the past, to negotiate on all questions which will bring us nearer to a solution of the vital questions confronting our nation . . . Only a peaceful policy can guarantee the German people a happy and peaceful future. Our path is paved with the following principles:

1. Annulment of the Paris Agreements, the necessary pre-condition for the reunification of Germany.
2. Immediate understanding between the two parts of Germany on the removal of militarism and to prepare free all-German elections to a National Assembly.

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(cont. from front page)

"WE SHALL DEFEND OURSELVES"

3. A joint request from both parts of Germany addressed to the Four Great Powers for a speedy conclusion of a peace treaty and the withdrawal of all occupation troops.
4. Continucus consultations between representatives of East and West Germany on all other questions of economic, social and cultural cooperation."

Prime Minister Grotewohl pointed out that the negotiations between the Soviet Union and Austria had shown the way to the solution of the German problem. The Prime Minister stated:

"The Soviet Union has recognised the independence and the equal rights of Austria. Austria will tolerate no foreign military bases on its territory, and will enter no unilateral military alliances. In return, the Austrian people will receive their national independence. This is a great step forward for the maintenance of peace. The solution of the German problem on this basis is possible, if the right conditions are created: this means for West Germany the steering of an independent course and the removal of the Paris Agreements."

In his speech Prime Minister Grotewohl contrasted the developments of the past ten years in East and West Germany. He said:

"In one part of Germany, then the Soviet-occupied zone, the lessons of history had been learned ... Fascism was wiped out, militarism was destroyed, the war-criminals were punished, the concerns and monopolies were deprived of power, and imperialism was removed.

"Under the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party (formed by the fusion of the Social Democrats and Communists in April 1946, ed.), decisive democratic reforms were carried out, such as land reform, the requisitioning without compensation of the property of war criminals, and the ending of the educational monopoly of the moneyed classes ...

"In West Germany the fruits of liberation did not ripen in the same way. Developments there were quite different. The imperialist western powers ignored the international agreements on Germany and pursued a policy of divide and rule. They prevented the unification of the workers' movement in the whole of Germany, with the help of right-wing Social Democrats. The American imperialists protected the German monopolists, prevented de-cartelisation, and rejected all democratic reforms... They released the war criminals, and encouraged the reactionaries to reform old soldiers associations, and to spread the old bad spirit of Prussian militarism."

In conclusion, Prime Minister Grotewohl stated:

"The liberation from Fascism by the Soviet Army has smoothed the way for the development of Germany to a peace-loving and democratic state, which can take its place in the family of peaceable nations."

East Germany Launches Civil Airlines

The German Democratic Republic has begun preparations to enter international civil aviation. It was officially announced on April 27th that the "Deutsche Lufthansa" had been established as the civil aviation enterprise in East Germany, and that the company would take over from the Soviet authorities the big civil airfield at Schoenefeld, just outside the city boundaries of Berlin.

The routes to be flown by the new enterprise have not yet been announced.

Big Defeat for Adenauer in Local Elections

The Christian Democrats, party of West German Chancellor Adenauer, lost over 430,000 votes in the provincial elections held on April 24th in Lower Saxony, compared to the election results in 1953.

In four provincial elections held in the past few months Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democrats have lost over two million votes compared to 1953.

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION UP 12%

Some Branches Lag Behind Plan

Industrial production in East Germany was 12 per cent higher in the first quarter of 1955 than in the first quarter of 1954, official statistics published by the State Plan Commission on April 20th showed.

Despite this big increase, production in one or two main branches, particularly in engineering, still lagged one or two per cent behind the figures planned. The Plan Report singled out the ship-building and vehicle industries for criticism, since these industries had not fulfilled their export orders to the full.

Labour productivity in nationally owned industry was 7 per cent higher than in the previous year, and average wages rose by 5 per cent.

There were particularly big increases in the production of agricultural machinery and heavy lorries, both of which were more than double the 1954 figure, and in various household goods, particularly refrigerators (more than three times the 1954 figure).

The steady increase in the supplies of all sorts of foodstuffs was maintained during the first quarter of 1955, and 46 per cent more fish, 14 per cent more eggs and 10 per cent more fats were available than in the previous year. The Plan Report noted that as a result of the poor sugar-beet harvest last year it had been necessary to cut slightly the proportion of sugar used in the manufacture of various goods (jam, spirits etc.). It had also not been possible to meet the full demand for butter, owing to the great rise in butter consumption.

Shorts

The Dresden State Opera have produced Benjamin Britten's comic opera, "Albert Herring", composed in 1947 for the "English Opera Group", for the first time in the German Democratic Republic.

* * *

A Pablo Picasso exhibition containing over fifty pictures from a series drawn in 1953 and 1954, mainly on the subject of "The Artist and his Model", opened in East Berlin on April 28th.

80 More Spies Surrender

Warning to West Berlin

More than eighty agents of western secret services, who had been active in the German Democratic Republic, have surrendered voluntarily to the authorities in the past three weeks, it was officially announced in Berlin on May 4th.

The surrenders followed the Government announcement on April 12th that a total of 521 agents had been rounded up by the security services, which had been accompanied by the announcement that agents who surrendered voluntarily would not be prosecuted.

Details of the activities of some of the 600 agents were given to eastern and western correspondents in Berlin on May 4th by Colonel Borrmann, a leading official of the security service.

Here are some of the details which he gave:

In the town of Anklam a three-man espionage group acting on the direct orders of the intelligence service of the NATO were arrested. Two of the men arrested were old members of the nazi party. They were equipped with radio transmitters, and had already tested radio communication with an agent operating in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The East German security service has arrested a seaman named Gerd Tourbier, who had been hired by the "Provincial Office for the Protection of the Constitution" in Kiel to carry on espionage in British and Swedish ports.

In Weimar a teacher named Gerhard Benkowitz had organised an armed gang on the orders of the American-financed organisation "Fighting Group against Inhumanity". This group was charged with the task of destroying the Saale Dam, the Weimar electric power station, and a number of important bridges.

Colonel Borrmann gave detailed information of similar activities on the part of many dozens of others, and journalists were shown the pistols, radio sets, forged passes and other material which had been confiscated on the arrest of the criminals. A series of trials of these agents are expected as soon as all investigations are completed.

Concluding his disclosures, Colonel Borrmann stated:

"All attempts made by the American, British and other secret services are doomed to failure, since the authorities of the German Democratic Republic can rely on the help of the working population not only in the German Democratic Republic, but also in West Berlin and West Germany.

"The West Berlin population must take the initiative in calling for the closing of the spy centres situated in West Berlin, since these spy centres endanger them.

"The authorities in the German Democratic Republic cannot continue to tolerate these provocations staged from West Berlin, and have thus taken all necessary measures to protect the life and property of peaceful citizens, and the achievements of the working population in the German Democratic Republic."

Weapons, radios, frog-men suits and other equipment seized when western spies were arrested in the German Democratic Republic

TEN YEARS OF PEACEFUL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

By Paul Strassenberger

The ten years which have passed since the liberation of Germany from fascism have been marked by enormous strides in industrial production in East Germany.

The progress made has been all the more marked in view of the great obstacles presented by the partitioning of Germany, and the legacy of the past.

In 1946, as a result of the Hitlerite war, industrial production in East Germany was well below half the 1936 level. The actual figure was 42.9 per cent.

We were faced with the task not only of getting industrial production going again, but of compensating for the breaking of traditional sources of supply which the arbitrary partioning of Germany entailed.

The First Five Year Plan, which went into operation on January 1st 1951, foresaw an increase in industrial production during the five year period of 92 per cent, so that in 1955 total industrial production would be more than twice as large as in 1936. The plan has been going so well that there is every prospect that this goal will have been reached and exceeded by the end of 1955.

The speed of development in various branches of industry has been highly differentiated, so that the structure of our entire industry has been considerably changed. The metallurgical and engineering brar ches have gone ahead much faster than some other branches, so that by the end of 1954 metallurgical production was 123 per cent above the 1950 figure, and engineering production was 85 per cent up.

Here are some examples of the way in which the partitioning of Germany has made this development particularly difficult. In 1936 the part of Germany which today forms the German Democratic Republic produced only 1.3 per cent of the total German pig iron. At the same time, 32 per cent of the metal working industry, which used this pig iron, was situated in our part of Germany.

As a result of the embargo policy of the American Government supplies of pig iron and steel from West Germany, the natural supplier, were extremely hampered, and for a time were cut off altogether. The situation was only saved by imports of steel from the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies.

It was obviously necessary for us to construct a basis here for our metallurgical industry, and this was done by reconstructing old factories and foundries, such as those in Brandenburg, Riesa, Groeditz and Hennigsdorf, and by building the entirely new "Stalin" Foundry Combine on the Oder. As a result of this renovation and new construction, and with the help of the import of iron ore from the Soviet Union, and coke from Poland, it was possible for us to turn out 1,390,000 tons of pig iron and 2,340,000 tons of raw steel in 1954.

Research engineers played a big part in solving the serious problem arising from the lack of hard coke for raw iron production from the poor quality of iron ore available here. The West Iron Works in Calbe are now successfully producing raw iron from local raw materials in the first low shaft furnace in the world, using high temperature soft coal coke.

Similar problems faced the coal industry. As above stated, we were dependent on imports of hard coke, since deposits of hard coal in the German Democratic Republic are very small. Our research engineers have now evolved a method of producing metallurgical coke from brown coal, which is already being turned out by the "Matyas Rakosi" cokery in Lauchhammer. Other such cokeries are to be built in the coming years.

In 1953 only 2.6 million tons of hard coal were mined in the German Democratic Republic, as compared with 124 million tons in West Germany, so that it was necessary to regear our industry to the use of brown coal and briquettes. This problem has also been successfully solved; our railways now run satisfactorily on brown coal briquettes and some branches of industry are even going over to an increased use of raw brown coal instead of briquettes.

Another difficulty was the complete lack of a heavy engineering industry, the pre-requisite for the development of exports and for big capital investments in the power, metallurgical, coal and chemical industries. Many important works had thus to be completely newly built or reconstructed. Amongst these were the following heavy engineering works: Wildau, for rolling mill equipment; the "October 7th" works in Berlin, for boring and turning lathes; Bergmann-Borsig, Berlin, for turbines and boilers; the Goerlitz Turbine Works, and the Lauchhammer Scraper, Conveyor Belt and Equipment Works.

In the chemical industry the production of phosphates had to be built up. The lack of basic chemicals made wide-reaching changes and modifications necessary, but in spite of this the volume of our chemical industry in 1953 was 179 per cent above the 1936 level.

Difficulties arising from the division of Germany also affected light industry and the food industry. For example our fishing fleet consisted of only 12 cutters in 1949; today we have 200 cutters, 35 loggers and 6 trawlers.

During the period of the Five Year Plan there has also been a shifting in the social-economic structure of industry. In 1950 nationally owned factories contributed 76.8 per cent of the total industrial production. By 1955 the proportion had risen to 83 per cent.

Invaluable help has been given at all stages of this development by the Soviet Union. After 1945 the largest and most important industrial plant in East Germany was taken over by the Soviet Union as reparations for the immense, damage done by the German armies during the war. Soviet technicians and engineers rebuilt these factories into model plant, and here the most capable Germans workers learned from their Soviet friends how to run such big plants. As a result, when the last of these factories were handed back to the German people at the beginning of 1954, well-trained German managers and staff were available to run them for the benefit of the people.

STEPS TO GERMAN UNITY

A Ten-Year Chronicle

The history of Germany in the ten years since the end of the war shows an almost endless series of proposals from the Soviet Union and the East German authorities for ending the partitioning of the country. All these offers and proposals have either been ignored or rejected by the western allies and the West German authorities. On these pages we give a condensed chronicle of the most important of these attempts to reach unity:

1946

July 12th: Conference of Four Foreign Ministers in Paris ends without result after western representatives evade Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's proposal for formation of a united Germany and conclusion of a peace treaty.

1947

April 24th: Moscow Conference of Four Foreign Ministers breaks up after western representatives rejected Soviet plan for German reunification. Main points of Soviet plan were:

a) Centralised German administrative departments for finance, industry, transport etc should be formed.

b) Allied Control Council in cooperation with democratic German parties should work out provisional constitution.

c) All-German elections to be held, and provisional German Government formed, charged with eradication of militarism and fascism.

June 9th: Prime Ministers of all German provinces in East and West meet in Munich. Prime Ministers from East Germany propose discussion of formation of all-German Government. Meeting breaks up when western Prime Ministers, on American orders, refuse to discuss this point.

December 15th: Foreign Ministers' meeting in London ends after western foreign ministers rejected Soviet proposal for formation of all-German government. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov stated: "The German question can only be solved by the preservation of the economic and political unity of Germany."

1948

June 20th: Western powers finally partition Germany by carrying through separate currency reform there.

1949

June 20th: Paris meeting of Foreign Ministers ends, after western representatives have again rejected Soviet proposals. Soviet Foreign Minister Vishinsky proposed the creation, "on the basis of German economic organs at present existing in the Eastern and Western Zones", of an all-German state council. The western foreign ministers proposed that the draft West German constitution should be arbitrarily extended to East Germany.

September 7th: Separate West German state constituted in Bonn, with Konrad Adenauer as Chancellor.

October 7th: German Democratic Republic constituted in Berlin, with Otto Grotewohl as Prime Minister.

1950

November 30th: East Germany makes first direct approach to West German authorities. Grotewohl writes to Adenauer proposing the formation of an All-German Constituent Council.

1951

January 30th: East German People's Chamber repeats offer of direct negotiations with West German representatives. People's Chamber unanimously declares that the East German delegates to such discussions will be fully empowered to discuss all relevant questions, including free elections, size of police forces in East and West etc.

March 2nd: People's Chamber appeals to West German Parliament to join in making joint proposals to Foreign Ministers Conference asking for conclusion of peace treaty with Germany during 1951.

June 21st: Meeting of Four Deputy Foreign Ministers in Paris breaks down after western representatives decline Soviet proposal to discuss demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany.

September 15th: People's Chamber appeals to West German Parliament to join in negotiations on the holding of all-German free elections to a National Assembly. "Negotiations on this subject should be held in Berlin as soon as possible" the appeal states.

October 10th: People's Chamber renews its appeal and asks West German Parliament to answer clearly the following questions:

> "Is the (West German) Federal Parliament agreeable to the speedy holding of All-German negotiations on vital questions confronting the German people?
>
> Does the Federal Parliament agree that these negotiations should deal with two questions: The holding of free all-German elections aimed at the establishment of a united, democratic and peace-loving Germany; and the question of speeding-up the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany?"

November 2nd: People's Chamber establishes a commission to work out a draft law for free elections to a German National Assembly.

On the same date East German President Wilhelm Pieck writes to West German President Theodor Heuss proposing talks "at the summit" on all-German negotiations.

November 20th: President Pieck writes again to President Heuss renewing his proposals.

1952

January 9th: People's Chamber unanimously accepts Draft Electoral Law for free all-German elections. This draft law is based in all its main provisions (freedom of electoral propaganda, secret voting, sealing of ballot-boxes, etc) on the provisions of the electoral law of the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic; the only important deviation from the Weimar Law is that the voting age should be reduced from 21 to 18. People's Chamber names 5 repre-

sentatives to negotiate on the details of the draft law with West German representatives.

February 2nd: East German Cabinet appeals to Four Powers to speed up peace treaty, and asks West German cabinet to join in appeal.

March 10th: Soviet Union submits to Western powers draft of peace treaty to be concluded with Germany. Main points include: Germany to be restored as united state; all occupation forces to be withdrawn; "Germany to enter no alliance or coalition directed against any state whose armed forces took part in the war against Germany".

March 13th: People's Chamber appeals to West German Parliament to join in taking action, following the Soviet draft for peace treaty.

September 5th: People's Chamber elects delegation to travel to Bonn and present a letter personally to Dr Ehlers, Chairman of the West German Parliament. The delegation is given full powers:

> "to conduct the necessary negotiations for the sending of representatives of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic to the (planned) Four Power Conference, and to discuss the steps to be taken to establish a Commission for free all-German elections."

October 31st: People's Chamber proposes that West German Parliament should send delegation to Berlin on November 13th to discuss proposals made by both sides for all-German elections.

1953

March 20th: People's Chamber appeals to entire German people. "The People's Chamber declares that it stands by its proposals aiming at: All-German understanding on the speediest conclusion of a peace treaty which will ensure the existence of Germany as a united, independent and democratic state: The withdrawal of all occupation troops; the establishment of an all-German government through free, democratic, secret and direct elections throughout Germany."

July 30th: People's Chamber proposes immediate negotiations between representatives of East and West Germany on the following subjects:

a) Increased East-West trade;

b) Transport and travel between East and West;

c) Creation of preconditions in East and West for the holding of free all-German elections;

d) The working out of a unified electoral law for the whole of Germany.

The People's Chamber stated that the above points were only proposals, and that both partners could make all proposals they liked at such a meeting.

August 15th: Soviet note to western powers makes following proposals:

a) Peace conference on Germany should meet before February 1954. German delegates should take part in all preparations for conference.

b) Provisional All-German Government should be formed by existing parliaments of East and West Germany.

c) Provisional government should prepare free democratic elections throughout Germany.

August 26th: People's Chamber declares immediate readiness to form, together with West German Parliament, a Provisional All-German Government, the main task of which shall be the preparation of all-German free elections.

October 7th: Wilhelm Pieck, re-elected President of German Democratic Republic, states:

> "We declare once again our readiness to reach all-German understanding on all questions serving the democratic unity of a peace-loving Germany."

November 25th: Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht makes following offer in name of Government of German Democratic Republic:

> "We are ready, today as in the past, to sit down round a table with the representatives of West Germany, without any previous conditions, to clarify all problems which could help to produce German unity on a democratic basis, and to bring about a peace treaty."

Ulbricht made the following suggestions for the subject of such talks:

a) Expansion of trade between the two halves of Germany.

b) Easing of conditions of travel between two halves of Germany.

c) The strength and armament of police forces in the two halves.

d) Germany-wide campaign against militarist propaganda, coupled with encouragement of worthwhile literature and art.

1954

February 3rd: People's Chamber proposed that plebiscite should be held throughout Germany to determine whether German people preferred a peace treaty or the EDC treaties.

February 18th: Berlin Conference breaks up, after western representatives have rejected all proposals made by Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov for solving German problem. Molotov's suggestions included the following:

a) East and West Germans should participate in conference.

b) Peace Conference with Germany to be held by October 1954.

c) All-German plebiscite should be held with question "EDC or peace treaty?"

d) All-German Government should be formed to supervise free elections; occupation troops should leave before elections.

e) Germany should be neutralised, occupation troops should leave within six months; Four Powers to control strength of East and West police.

f) East and West Germany should establish joint committees to encourage trade, cultural development etc.

g) Parties concerned should reach agreement on strength and armament of East and West German police.

April 21st: People's Chamber announces once again: "We were in favour of negotiations; we are in favour of negotiations; we shall always be in favour of negotiations."

July 16th: The Government of the German Democratic Republic officially announced that it was ready at any time to negotiate an agreement with West German on the strength, armament and stationing of the respective police forces. The announcement followed the publication of British 'White Book containing details of the alleged strength of the East German forces.

August 4th: People's Chamber once again appeals to West German Parliament, making following two proposals:

a) Both Parliaments should ask Four Powers to resume negotiations on Germany, with the

cooperation of German delegates, and should ask powers to refrain from including either part of Germany in military groupings until such a conference has been held.

b) West German representatives should be named to discuss with East German delegates a joint standpoint for solution of German problem in the framework of the European Security Pact.

September 16th: People's Chamber sends West German Parliament a six-point programme for all-German talks. The points suggested for discussion are:

a) Measures for German and European security.

b) Peace treaty and sovereignty for all Germany.

c) New Big Four conference on Germany, with German participation, to discuss peaceful solution and withdrawal of occupation troops.

d) No military pact to be concluded by either part of Germany.

e) Joint steps to ban atomic weapons and prevent their manufacture or stationing in Germany.

f) Joint programme to prevent German rearmament, and agreement on strength and armament of police forces in both parts of the country.

October 6th: Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, speaking in Berlin, proposes immediate steps as follows:

a) Immediate Four Power agreement on withdrawal of occupation troops from East and West Germany.

b) Four Powers should discuss holding of all-German free elections on the basis of proposals made at Berlin Conference in January-February 1954, or any new proposals.

c) East and West Germany should endeavour to come nearer together by forming all-German economic and cultural bodies.

October 23rd: Soviet Government sends note to three western powers proposing the holding of Foreign Ministers Conference in November 1954 to discuss following points:

a) Restoration of German unity on peaceful and democratic basis and holding of all-German free elections.

b) Withdrawal of occupation troops from East and West Germany.

c) Summoning of all-European Conference on collective security.

November 19th: East German Prime Minister Grotewohl presents Government programme to People's Chamber. Official programme includes following points:

a) West Germany should cancel Paris Agreements establishing new Wehrmacht, and both German states should renounce inclusion in aggressive military groupings.

b) East and West Germany should consult on holding of general, secret, direct free all-German elections. Neither East German nor West German electoral law need be taken as basis.

c) Representatives of both halves of Germany should discuss normalisation measures, particularly in economic, social and cultural fields.

d) Both parts of Germany should urge Four-Power agreement on simultaneous withdrawal of occupation troops.

e) Representatives of both parts of Germany, or of all-German government, should particiapte in drafting of peace treaty.

December 2nd: Representatives of the Soviet Union, European People's Democracies and German Democratic Republic, meeting in Moscow, issue declaration strongly opposing West German rearmament and proposing:

a) Abandonment of plans for remilitarising West Germany.

b) Agreement on the holding of all-German free elections during 1955 and the establishment as a result of these elections of an all-German Government.

The Moscow declaration ended with a warning that if the Paris Agreements were ratified it would be necessary for the states concerned to take measures to ensure security and the maintenance of peace.

December 17th: Presidium of People's Chamber appeals again to West German Parliament. The appeal called for rejection of the Paris Agreement, and for direct negotiations between representatives of East and West Germany on the holding of free all-German elections in 1955. "The People's Chamber is ready to enter into such negotiations without posing any pre-conditions" the appeal states.

1955

January 15th: Soviet Government proposes Four Power negotiations on democratic all-German elections under suitable international control or supervision, if East and West German Government approved such control.

March 2nd: East German Prime Minister Grotewohl proposes plebiscite throughout Germany on the question:

"Are you in favour of free all-German elections in 1955, or are you in favour of the Paris Agreements?"

The plebiscite should be conducted on the basis of the plebiscite law of the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic. "We have no objection to the plebiscite being held under international control if the West German Government wishes this" Grotewohl states.

May 7th: Grotewohl states that Government of German Democratic Republic is ready at all times to negotiate with West Germany "on all questions which can bring nearer the solution of the vital questions confronting our nation". The basic principles for inner-German negotiations must be:

a) Annulment of Paris Agreements.

b) Immediate understanding between both parts of Germany for removal of militarism and for preparation of free all-German elections to National Assembly.

c) Joint request by both parts of Germany to Four Powers for speedy conclusion of Peace Treaty and withdrawal of all occupation troops.

d) Close contact between representatives of East and West Germany to consider all other questions of economic, social and cultural cooperation.

Democratic

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

A few days ago a very remarkable group of women held a re-union in the little town of Fuerstenberg, fifty miles north of Berlin, and I was privileged to attend the meeting.

The women did not at first sight look very remarkable — a group of mainly middle-aged women, a number with greying hair, and a sprinkling of women in their early thirties. They might have been members of a Co-op Women's Guild, or the women's group of a local peace committee.

But if you looked closer you saw that many of them had a number roughly tattooed in blue on their left forearm: for these women were all survivors of the notorious nazi Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp, which was situated just outside Fuerstenberg.

They had come together again to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their liberation from the camp by the advance of the Red Army across northern Germany.

* * *

There were about one hundred of them, from nearly every country in Europe, representatives of the few pitiful thousands of starved and beaten women who survived the camp in which 92,000 of their comrades were murdered by the nazis.

They had been sent to the camp, nearly all of them, because they had gone on fighting against the nazis, inside Germany and in the occupied countries, even during the dark days in 1941 and 1942 when Hitler's armies had been sweeping forward, seemingly invincible. And in the camp, incredible as it may seem, they had gone on fighting; organising study groups, saving the lives of particularly valuable comrades, and preparing themselves for the task of helping to rebuild Europe after the war.

They had come back to the site of their torment, ten years after liberation, not simply to mourn the tens of thousands who had died there, but to organise the fight against the new nazi Wehrmacht which is being built today in West Germany.

I got to know some of these quiet heroines, and I should like to tell you about one of them.

Her name is Marta Reichel, and she lives in Magdeburg. She is 53 today, a dumpy working-class housewife, with nothing very remarkable about her looks.

In 1933, after Hitler came to power, she helped a group of workers in Magdeburg to get out anti-nazi pamphlets. At first they were printed; later, after the Gestapo had seized the illegal press, they had to be duplicated.

In 1935 she was sent to prison by the nazis on a charge of "preparing high treason". Released in 1937, she went right back to the job of organising resistance.

"Splendid Soldiers"

"My experience is that the Germans are splendid soldiers and I am glad they are on our side this time. It would be presumptuous on our part to think we should train them. They are pretty good at this business as the record will clearly show."

General Anthony C. McAuliffe, Commander in Chief, U.S. Army in Europe, addressing Foreign Press Association, Bonn, West Germany, April 12th 1955.

In 1940 her husband Heinrich Reichel, an underground leader, was arrested, and imprisoned in Magdeburg prison. She immediately went to work organising "connections" with the prison, getting messages in to him, and receiving instructions from him in return. She organised an escape bid, but it failed, and her husband was executed.

But underground anti-Hitler work in Magdeburg had never ceased: the leaflets calling for the ending of the war and the overthrow of the nazis kept on appearing. The Gestapo threw its net wide; Marta Reichel was torn away from her two children and sent to Ravensbrueck.

And here, under the very noses of the SS, she went on organising, encouraging comrades who were losing all hope, and taking under her wing several of the very young anti-fascist girls in the camp.

After liberation she hurried back to Magdeburg, and went to work helping to clear up the mess, and to guarantee that no new nazi army should march across Europe.

Let us all ask ourselves a question. Are we doing all we can to prevent it too?

* * *

On May 5th, following the ratification of the Paris Agreements, which authorise the formation of a new West German Wehrmacht, the West German Government proudly proclaimed that it now headed a "sovereign state". The official announcement discreetly failed to mention that the agreements left the three western powers "the rights ... relating to the stationing of armed forces in Germany ... and Germany as a whole, including the unification of Germany."

The ceremony in Bonn, the West German capital, was interesting. A military band played the old nationalist anthem "Deutschland ueber Alles", armed men in steel helmets presented arms, and West German Chancellor Adenauer read a proclamation. The first man to congratulate Chancellor Adenauer was his State Secretary Hans Globke.

This was very fitting, for during the nazi period Globke was head of the Department of Racial Questions in Hitler's Ministry of the Interior, and wrote the official legal commentary to the notorious Nuremberg Laws, which robbed German Jews of all civil rights.

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Through an unfortunate oversight, we failed to mention in our last issue that most of the material for the article on the West German censoring of Remarque's latest book came from the excellent literary magazine "Neue Deutsche Literatur" published in East Berlin.

This monthly, produced by the German Writers' Association, prints extracts from work in progress by noted German authors, as well as short stories and criticism.

I can heartily recommend it to any readers who can read German and are interested in literary developments. One year's subscription costs 18 marks, and you can order this, like all other newspapers and magazines produced in the German Democratic Republic, from:

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If any reader would like to have a specimen copy, just drop a line to this office. But remember this magazine appears only in German.

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